

Mr. Charlesworth

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—CHRIST.

The Christian Freeman.

A MONTHLY UNITARIAN JOURNAL.

DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS, MORAL, AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

No. 4.—VOL. XXIII.]

APRIL, 1879.

[NEW SERIES.—PRICE 1½d.

AUNT LYDIA'S ROMANCE.

On a cold December evening, when snow and sleet prevailed, and piercing winds blew; an evening when most mothers with their children were sitting in cosy homes by snug fires, enjoying cheerful conversation and amusing books, and the comfort within dispels all thought of cold without—it was on this evening that a poor woman and young child were seen travelling along as if to make for some abode.

The child's garments, without being abject, had evidently been made the most of to protect him against the weather; nor were those of the woman particularly adapted to an inclement season of the year. This woman walked with the feeble and uncertain step of weakness and ill-health; nevertheless, her manner seemed to indicate that she had an object in view, as she went with all the energy she could command, sometimes to carry, sometimes to drag the child along. At last she gained the door of the house she seemed making for, and ringing the bell with her remaining strength, sank exhausted, no longer able to keep the little one in her arms.

The servant came to the door, and was in a terrible fright at seeing, as she thought, a dead woman and a crying child. She ran to her mistress—"Oh, do, dear Miss Lydia, come here! There is a dead woman in the porch and a baby on the door mat. What shall we do? and the baby left on our hands! What in the world will people say, when they hear of it?"

To Miss Lydia it mattered very little what the people would say. She went at once, and horror-struck as she was at the sight of an apparently lifeless woman with a child crying piteously

by her side, she quickly saw she had need of all her presence of mind to give the word of command, for perhaps this poor unfortunate might not be dead after all, but in need of immediate aid. The moments were precious: some children came out of the parlour on hearing the noise. Aunt Lydia had generally a number of these little folks about to whom she showed kindness, and who, in return, did what they could for her. One was given the baby, with an injunction to warm and feed it at once; another was despatched for the doctor. Then, with the servant's help, Aunt Lydia lifted the apparently lifeless body, which she managed to get on a couch in her own bed-room, fortunately on the first floor of the house.

Now Aunt Lydia's tears flowed fast; she was dead, and there was no one to tell of her heart's sorrows. As she gazed on the pinched features, now set in the calmness of death, a thought of recognition came up, and recalled the look of some one long ago, but how, or who, or where, she could not recollect. Then, taking her hand with all tenderness—

"Poor thing! her trials in this world were doubtless hard, and she has sunk in despair, unable to fight life's battle, perhaps not realising the kind Providence above. The cause of her sorrow we may learn at some future day; for the present, let us be satisfied that it is confided to the Searcher of hearts."

There was no clue of any kind found, not even a mark on the clothes to tell the name, only a wedding ring, taken and put in a place of safety by Aunt Lydia, told the story of her marriage.

Aunt Lydia felt that though the forlorn one had died without will or testament, she had not gone over the river without leaving a legacy which she deemed most precious. She took the boy in her arms, and vowed that with a mother's love she would care for him until some one who had a better claim should step in.

Some thought at first she had been hasty, but on further consideration it was deemed she had acted nobly; and if a friendless woman had a child to leave in this world, she could not have left it in a better place. And now Aunt Lydia's care of the child began. She took it to her own room and gave it a refreshing bath on the warm rug. Most good people say that cleanliness is next to godliness, but it would not have been well for the little fellow if he had not practically learned the first before he was of an age to understand that which the apostle declares to be a great mystery. A little bed was arranged for him and one end of the room converted into a nursery, which soon had a power of attraction for the hitherto lonely woman; for I suppose, in a sense, all women are lonely who possess no children of their own. In the quietude of her chamber, Aunt Lydia looked her duty sternly in the face, praying for strength, which she felt she greatly needed; for had she not taken the place of both mother and father to the little one? And where was he who should have been the guardian of his boy?

Aunt Lydia said the child should have the plain name of John, she would not give a high-sounding, much less a namby-pamby one. Said she, he can be called Jack as soon as he gets old enough to run among the boys. It will be boy-like and answer better, seeing he is left altogether to the care of womankind, and with no father, whose manly virtues might prove an example. So very soon he was called Jack by everyone who knew him.

I need hardly tell how the little fellow grew and improved; each succeeding day only serving more and more to endear him to his adopted mother, who never wanted a better companion than Jack proved as his

intelligence developed. As soon as he became of an age to mix with boys, he was encouraged to do so, a little roughing it not being deemed out of the way, as good discipline; this judicious woman thinking it unwise that he should be tied to her apron strings, however pleasant it was to have him with her most of the time.

When Jack was about six, Aunt Lydia told him something about his mother, wishing herself to be the imparter of as much of the story of his infancy as she deemed best for him to know, fearing that he might learn of it from his companions, to whom it was doubtless known. This made Jack thoughtful, wondering much how he came to have two mammas, and no father, like other boys, and whether his other mother would have been as good as Aunt Lydia, and many other childish ideas upon the subject, which he did not like to ask about, trusting that when he grew to be a man, he would know many things which were now only mysteries.

After this, Miss Lydia's circumstances changed by the loss of a great part of her fortune. From having had enough to live on in ease and comfort, she was obliged to move into a very small cottage, and exercise the most rigid economy. She grieved more for Jack than herself; for she had intended to give him great advantages. She felt that he would be obliged to go early to some occupation and support himself, and therefore it was not too soon, if an opportunity offered, for him to begin to observe and know something of the pursuits of business, which might be to his advantage in after life.

Fortunately her step-brother, Mr. George Markham, said he would undertake to further the little lad's interests. Himself a man of business, he said he would be all the brighter for mingling with it now whenever he had a chance. So after school hours and on holidays he was allowed the run of his office and warehouse; and it was marvellous to see how keen the little fellow's powers of observation became under the privilege. Besides some knowledge of money and accounts, Jack became a perfect

repository of shipping intelligence and acts with regard to the sea. Indeed, he was always making friends with seafaring men and captains of vessels who came there, and who almost always had some curiosity in store carefully kept to bestow upon their favourite.

But it was of their sea stories and of the lost being found again and coming back, which had by far the greater charm for Jack, who invariably went home with such a recital in nautical phraseology as proved a great amusement to Miss Lydia.

Jack was now a bright, intelligent lad, large of his age, and with an honest, good-humoured way that took all hearts by storm. One day, when he happened to be at uncle George's, a stranger came to the office, introduced himself as Mr. Seagrove, and proceeded to transact some slight business, evidently of no great importance. This gentleman had the look of easy prosperity, so unmistakeable to good circumstances. His curly head was somewhat too grey for a man of his years, while his bronzed face bespoke familiarity with other climes. His manner was reserved, and like that of one whose heart is weary with some secret sorrow. Mr. Seagrove addressed the boy.

"And who are you, my fine fellow?"
"I am little Jack Needham," was the reply.

"Little Jack Needham," repeated he with a look of perplexity. Then taking a letter from his pocket, and looking over it as if to refresh his memory on some point, while tears came to his eyes.

"I thought you were Mr. Markham's son. But come here, my boy. And who is your mother?"

Nothing daunted, Jack replied, "Miss Lydia Needham," without being struck with the strangeness of both question and answer.

It was then that the stranger appeared deeply affected, as, folding the boy in his arms, he stroked his curly head, the counterpart of his own without the grey, then looking into his face and beholding with satisfaction his bright dark eyes.

"My boy, you are indeed like a long lost friend. Her eyes—her coun-

tenance. But Jack, have you no father?"

Jack not knowing what to make of all this, looked at uncle George.

"Jack has many friends, and he does not forget one whom providence gave to be both father and mother, everything, when his own mother died, and his father, if he exists, is far away."

The tears now rained fast down the stranger's cheeks. "I thank the providence that has protected, and I bless the kind hand that has fostered you, when he who was your natural guardian was far from you. For, Jack, I am your father."

"I must see that good mother and thank her for her care. But run out, my boy, and play, while I talk to Mr. Markham. But stop, here is some money for the men on the wharf," and he pulled out a handful of gold pieces. "Tell them your father sent it—mark you—your own father."

You may imagine Mr. Markham's surprise at finding Jack thus suddenly taken possession of by a father. The explanation followed, Mr. Seagrove saying, "I will tell you why I have no doubt this is my son, and how I came here to find him.

"It was my fate, some years ago, to love and marry a young and pretty girl, unknown to her father and only relative, who showed me no favour, and was bent on marrying her to another, in every way distasteful, but in better circumstances. I was a seafaring man then, waiting to work my way up in the world, and with no one to advance my interests; for I had seen hard times, having early lost my mother, and my father dying before I became a man. Soon after the marriage I was obliged to join my ship for a short voyage, as we thought, hoping to return speedily, and make it all right with her father, who, we thought, would come round when he found it inevitable. We made a much longer voyage than was expected, yet I did not neglect to write. Then dangers of all kinds beset me, stormy seas, wrecks, and such escapes for life as rarely fall to the lot of man.

"During my adventures there was

sometimes no way to communicate, and when I did, my communications could never have reached her for whom they were intended, and who was thus left to bear her sorrows alone. I had been a stranger in the town where my wife lived, in a State far distant from this. Among the few whom I knew, I wrote to inquire as soon as I was able, but I could only learn that her father had died and she had departed no one knew where. I was much concerned, fearing she had been left in poverty, and that she would perhaps meet with a hard fate in the world.

"I was abroad almost two years, knocking about with means scarcely enough to live on. As soon as I could manage to get a little ahead, I resolved to come back and search for my wife, which I did, but with my utmost efforts I could learn nothing of Caroline Lane. Those who knew her had removed from the place; some told me I had better not inquire. Disheartened, I left with no easy mind; for doubtless I had been the cause of trouble to one whom I loved dearly, and who I felt sure was quite unfit for the rough gales of a hard world. And now fortune before so perverse took me under her favouring wing. I plunged into business, gained the confidence of my fellow-men, became rich, but restlessness pursued me in my leisure hours. I returned for another search just six years after my first departure, and which might have proved vain, but for a letter given me by a man whose acquaintance I remembered to have made in the town where my wife lived, and whom I accidentally met in this city, where he is now in business. This letter bore the date of a year and a-half after I had first left, and was enclosed with a request to be delivered. My wife knew of my acquaintance with this man and doubtless thought it her only way of sending it, as after leaving her town she had no means of forwarding it to the ship-owners or agent.

"The person to whom this letter was sent, being away for a long time unknown to her, did not receive it till after my second departure. He then sent it to the agent of the owners,

but they had all lost sight of me for some time."

The stranger now handed the letter to Mr. Markham. It was addressed to Mr. John Seagrove, mate of the Rover. The envelope bore unmitigable signs of having been sent about the world. Inside, in feminine hand, was the following:

DEAR JOHN,—I write to inform you that I am now past hope. Perhaps it was your intention never to come back to me again. In that case it will never matter to you what becomes of our child, whom I have with difficulty maintained. Shortly after you left, father died, leaving me not a penny, and I did not like to tell the story of our marriage for I had no means of making it believed. I left our town, under the plea of poverty, and came here to _____ to seek employment. But my health and spirits have failed since my little boy was born, and I find I can no longer battle with the world, without hopes of seeing you again. I now resolve with my remaining strength to go with my boy back to a place, D_____, where I know a benevolent woman lives, Miss Lydia Needham, with whom I once went to school, and of whose kindness I have since often heard. I hope I shall have strength to lay my child at her door. If I then die he will no doubt find a protector. Should you wish to know about your child, God guide you till you find him, and may he forgive me if I have hard thoughts. My heart cannot acknowledge that you have deserted us.

Still your loving wife,
CAROLINE LANE.

The matter was now plain to uncle George. Mr. Seagrove added, "When I first came here to-day I had no expectation of finding my son, but to inquire about the Needhams, whose relative I was told you are. My heart failed me—I came back. When Jack told me his mother was Miss Lydia Needham, I felt that my wife had carried out her resolve, and that he was indeed my son."

"The story of his infancy renders it still more indubitable," said Mr. Markham.

John Seagrove then listened to its recital with deep feeling.

"I wish above all things to see and thank good Miss Lydia, though I must appear in the unpromising light of one who brought misfortune on a faithful woman, and but for an overruling Providence, might have been the cause of ruin to a helpless child. Oh! that my wife had been spared! But heaven be thanked, who has placed my son in good hands, and now restored him."

John Seagrove now indulged in grief which Mr. Markham felt was too sacred for curiosity, so he withdrew to write a short letter to Miss Lydia, with the first intimation preparatory to Jack's introducing his father.

That evening Mr. Seagrove, led by his son, presented himself to good Miss Lydia. His story was faithfully told, and not without much self-accusation, and when the name of Caroline Lane was mentioned, Miss Lydia remembered that such a girl had once been at the same school with her, but in a younger class, and she had afterwards forgotten her. John Seagrove recognised the wedding ring and some of the clothing. The baby's dress, which had been preserved, he declared to be made of one which his wife wore when they were married, and at other times, and of which he seemed to have a vivid recollection.

I know not whether Miss Lydia was sorry that Jack found a parent with a better claim than she. At all events the guardianship was never withdrawn, but confirmed. John Seagrove and she were married, and she was restored to more than her former good circumstances. Jack's training went on in much the same manner, and when he grew up he was remarkable for being keen in business, kind at heart, and prompt in action. He grew rich, and was well known in the world, as a benefactor and promoter of all noble things.

E. M. FOSTER.

CHEMISTS tell us that a single grain of the substance called iodine will impart colour to seven thousand times its weight of water. It is so in higher things—one companion, one book, one habit, may affect the whole of life and character.

A SHARP VOICE.

"Her voice was ever soft, Gentle, and low—an excellent thing in woman."

ELIHU BURRITT, who has done so much for the cause of peace and happiness, and who died a few weeks ago, wrote a short time before he died a few words for all families of children about the importance of cultivating a kind voice. He says:—

"There is no power of love so hard to get and keep as a kind voice. A kind hand is deaf and dumb. It may be wrought in flesh and blood, yet do the work of a soft heart, and do it with a soft touch. But there is no one thing that love so much needs as a sweet voice to tell what it means and feels; only it is hard to get and keep it in the right tone. One must start in youth and be on the watch night and day, at work and play, to get and keep a voice that shall speak at all times the thoughts of a kind heart. But this is the time when a sharp voice is most apt to be got. You often hear boys and girls say words at play with a quick, sharp tone, as if it were the snap of a whip. When one of them gets vexed, you will hear a voice that sounds as if it were made up of a snarl, a whine, and a bark. Such a voice often speaks worse than the heart feels. It shows more ill-will in the tone than in the words. It is often in mirth that one gets a voice or a tone that is sharp, and sticks to him through life, and stirs up ill-will and grief, and falls like a drop of gall on the sweet joys of home. Such as these get a sharp home voice for use, and keep their best voice for those they meet elsewhere, just as they would save their best cakes and pies for guests, and all their sour food for their own board. I would say to all boys and girls, 'Use your guest voice at home. Watch it day by day, as a pearl of great price, for it will be worth more to you in days to come than the best pearl hid in the sea. A kind voice is a joy like a lark's song to a hearth and home. It is to the heart what the light is to the eye. It is a light that sings as well as shines. Train it to sweet tones now, and it will keep in tune through life.'"

THE THREE BOOKS.

An aged servant of God, who lived in a poor and lonely cottage, always showed so much wisdom and sense when any one asked him for his advice about anything, that the people round about thought he must be a very learned man.

A very great scholar, who went one day to see him, and was astonished at the wise words he heard from his lips, said :—

“ How is it, my good friend, that I don’t see a library or any collection of books at all in your cottage ? I don’t even see the smallest book-shelf ; and yet you have been able to teach me, who am thought to be so learned myself, much I never knew before.”

“ Sir,” replied the old man, “ I have, it is true, but a very small collection of books—in fact, I have only three, but they are the three best a man can have. They are the wonderful works of God, which I can always look at, and which show me how great and good He is. The sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the trees ; the law of God written in my own *conscience*, telling me what I ought to do, and what I ought not to do ; and, most of all, the *Word* of God—the Bible. The works of God are spread out all round me in earth and sky ; they are as a great book always open. Conscience is a never silent teacher, unless we stop its voice ourselves by refusing to listen to it.

“ But these two books would fall short of teaching us the truest wisdom if we had not the blessed Word of God to make that known to us which we can learn in no other way. For in the Bible we read how God made the heavens and the earth, and all these glorious things we see around us. In that book we read what the blessed Saviour did and suffered for us, and what he commanded and promised. It tells us, too, how the Holy Spirit is promised to all who seek him. Conscience can, indeed, show us our sins, but it is God’s Word alone which teaches how we can be saved from them.

“ Thus, without a library or human teachers, the three books of Conscience, God’s Works, and God’s Word, will, if

explained by the Holy Spirit, make a man truly wise.”

THE UTILITY OF MENTAL ACTIVITY.

A THOUGHTLESS, inattentive mind,
O may we strive to cure,
Thus shall we mental value find,
And make the treasure sure.

To exercise our soul’s best powers,
And try our greatest skill,
Will help us to improve our hours,
And climb up wisdom’s hill.

But listlessly to dream away
Our brightest time on earth,
Will turn to dreary night our day,
Fertility to dearth.

In vain the farmer hopes to find
In a neglected field,
Rich and abundant sheaves to bind :
No produce can it yield.

And so if we neglect our mind,
And never try its powers,
No fresh, no brilliant thoughts we find,
To cheer our lonely hours.

No wonder-working man arose,
No genius ever shone,
Who left his mind to dull repose,
Or slumber’d like a drone.

But with the early breaking light
He rose and pondered deep,
Or in the silent hours of night
His thoughtful watch he’d keep.

Thus Newton, Milton, Shakespere too
Improved their fleeting hours,
And thus if we their plan pursue,
Success may e’en be ours.

Success in guiding well our thought,
And adding to our store,
Success in finding what we sought,
And searching still for more.

Like bees who gather day by day
Honey from every flower,
May we pursue our active way,
And knowledge be our dower.

Knowledge the hope, the aim of life,
Wisdom a treasure true,
Benevolence with blessings rife,
O these may we pursue.

Then act, for you can never tell
If lazily you lie,
How wisely you can do or well,
Or how much ill can fly.

The mind, like the material frame,
Needs food and exercise,
And it should always be our aim
To act and be most wise.

Horncastle. ELIZA HADDOCK.

THE BIBLE.

THE author of the following remarkable document is unknown. It was found in Westminster Abbey, nameless and dateless. It was first published about thirty years ago:—

THE BIBLE.

When the last hour comes to me, when in that upper chamber, long past midnight, the flickering light burns lowly, and passing forms noiselessly and quickly, too plainly show that death is there; when the bleak winter's wind whistles from without, or sends its melancholy moan through the lattice, alternating with the groan of the dying; when the softest tread and the slightest whisper fall harshly on the last scene; when feeling, and sight, and taste, and speech, all are gone, but immortal thought, the more immortal as it shakes away its mortal shackles, still lives in its freshness of eternal youth; in such an hour, when this present body shall have been wasted to a skeleton, this hand palsied of its strength, this eye glazed with the film of the grave, this cheek blanched with the last chill, this forehead—high and white, and broad, and clear now—shall be thickly studded with the dew-drops of death, and this tongue falters out the last farewell to the dear ones around, so long loved and laboured and cared for; when such an hour comes to me, I want to feel the ineffable consolation that some thing said, or something done, some line written, some sentence published, some page composed, some sentiment recorded, shall live after me; which shall, in its influence, continue to benefit and bless some candidate for the skies, to the last hour of recorded time. Feeling thus, now and heretofore, I desire to repeat of the Bible, that:—

A nation would be truly happy if it were governed by no other laws than those of this book.

It is so complete a system that nothing can be added to it or taken from it.

It contains everything needful to be known or done.

It affords a copy for a king, and a rule for a subject.

It gives instruction and counsel to a

senate, authority and direction to a magistrate.

It cautions a witness, requires an impartial verdict of a jury, and furnishes the judge with his sentence.

It sets the husband as lord of the household, and the wife as mistress of the table—tells him how to rule and her how to manage.

It entails power to parents, and enjoins obedience to children.

It prescribes and limits the sway of the sovereign, the rule of the ruler, and the authority of the master; commands the subjects to honour, and the servants to obey, and promises the blessing and protection of the Almighty to all that walk by its rules.

It gives directions for weddings and burials.

It promises food and raiment, and limits the use of both.

It points out a faithful and eternal guardian to the departing husband and father; tells him with whom to leave his fatherless children, and in whom his widow is to trust, and promises a father to the former and a husband to the latter.

It teaches a man how to set his house in order, and how to make his will; it appoints a dowry for his wife, and entails the right of the first-born, and shows how the younger branches shall be left.

It defends the right of all, and reveals vengeance to every defaulter, over-reacher, and oppressor.

It is the first book, the best book, and the oldest book in the world.

It contains the choicest matter, gives the best instruction, affords the greatest pleasure and satisfaction that ever was enjoyed; it contains the best laws and most profound mysteries that ever were penned; brings the best of tidings and affords the best of comforts to the inquiring and disconsolate.

It exhibits life and immortality from everlasting, and shows the way to glory.

It is a brief recital of all that is past, and a certain prediction of all that is to come.

It settles all matters in debate, resolves all doubts, and eases the mind and conscience of all their scruples.

It reveals the only living and true God, and shows the way to Him, and sets aside all other gods, and describes the vanity of them and all that trust in such ; in short, it is a book of laws, to show right and wrong ; a book of wisdom, that condemns all folly and makes the foolish wise ; a book of truth, that detects all lies and confutes all errors, and a book of life that shows the way from everlasting death.

It is the most compendious book in the world—the most authentic, and the most entertaining history that ever was published.

It contains the most ancient antiquities, strange events, wonderful occurrences, heroic deeds, and unparalleled wars.

It describes the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal worlds, and the origin of the angelic myriads, human tribes, and devilish legions.

It will instruct the accomplished mechanic and the most profound artist.

It teaches the best rhetorician, and exercises every power of the most skilful arithmetician ; puzzles the wisest anatomist, and exercises the wisest critic.

It corrects the vain philosopher, and confutes the wise astronomer ; it exposes the subtle sophist, and makes divines mad.

It is a complete code of laws, a perfect body of divinity, an unequalled narrative—a book of lives—a book of travels—a book of voyages.

It is the best covenant that ever was agreed on—the best deed that ever was sealed—the best evidence that ever was produced—the best will that ever was made, and the best testament that ever was signed ; to understand it is to be wise indeed ; to be ignorant of it is to be destitute of wisdom.

It is the king's best copy, the magistrate's best rule, the housewife's best guide, the servant's best directory, and the young man's best companion ; it is the school-boy's spelling book, and the learned man's masterpiece.

It contains a choice grammar for a novice, and a profound mystery for a sage.

It is the ignorant man's dictionary, and the wise man's directory.

It affords knowledge of witty inventions for the humorous, and dark sayings for the grave, and is its own interpreter.

It encourages the wise, the warrior, the swift, the overcomer, and promises an eternal reward to the excellent, the conqueror, the winner, and the prevalent ; and that which crowns all is, that the author is without partiality, and without hypocrisy—

“ In whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning.”

LOVE, THE ESSENCE OF LIFE.

HUMAN nature is the meeting-point of two different types. Conscience creates a class of beings that cannot be called mineral, vegetable, or even animal, for even the lowest grade of mankind is far removed from animals by conscience. How much of man's nature that is so contradictory is explainable by the fact that one hemisphere of his life is turned to nature and the other hemisphere is turned to God. This nature is plainly discernible among different men of the same nativity. In many cases the appetites and longings have been sharpened by contact with civilisation, and these men are worse for the influence of civilisation. There are men whose impulses guide them solely ; these men are sometimes almost angels ; while at other times they are brutes. It is unnecessary for me to go on through a series of illustrations.

“ Ye shall be children of the Highest.” This evidently signifies that all men by possession of spiritual life are children of God, even man in the lowest estate, though he does not know Him, even though addicted to the worst types of vice, they are still His children. The text speaks of a special relationship to God. Those who follow the precept there laid down are not only related to Him, but they resemble Him. We see that through a high and pure life men rise to be children of the Highest. The teachings of Christ were not in opposition to the laws of those days, they were in advance of the laws. If Christ's had been an antagonistic religion it might

have been doubted. There were other religions at that date, but it was not Christ's policy to be antagonistic to them. He went from the act to the principle. In the New Testament you do not find prescriptions laid down as to the form of worship and life to be practised as in other religions. Open to the Sermon on the Mount ; there is the culmination of Divine goodness. Laws are made for the purpose of endeavouring to restrain by force all evil that cannot be otherwise controlled. Christ's laws restrain evil and at the same time force goodness. The man who commits murder while in a state of frenzy, as he passes under the influence of civilisation becomes cured of that disposition ; and yet how many are there in our modern society who are restrained from acts of violence only by fear of the penalty attached to such deeds. The great principle of Christ, that he who hates his brother is a murderer, has yet to be learned. There is a great difference between the man in whom goodness is born and the man who has to educate himself up to a higher life. Some men have but one thought, but one inspiration—to get money. Sometimes this evil commences in their needy days, when there is a necessity for grasping economy, and what was once the only mode of sustaining life becomes a habit which it is impossible to eradicate. Ah, my hearers, life comes in many cases by losing and not by gaining. I say that the highest life is not acquired, as many men suppose, by getting, for he who practices that mode of life does not come up to Christ's, the highest laws.

Some men are marked for their external cleanliness and smooth, oily, sanctimonious manner. These people may be likened to the Pharisee who went up to the temple and thanked God that he was not sinful, like his neighbours. These men are generally regarded as—in one word, respectable. They commit no legal offence, but every day make depredations upon the laws of God. They do harm by doing no good. Their morality is not of the living spring ; it is the morality of a kind of barometer. If you take a

work of art that is made according to the fixed rules, it has no power. The sculptor must strike his chisel into the marble according to the impulses of inspiration, in order to make a great masterpiece. All great works are wrought by love of the subject. There are many men who, after gaining a reputation for high, impulsive actions, resort to rules, and in many cases lose their reputation by doing so. If God is represented as a thunderbolt, who by the slightest movement of His will may send us to hell or to heaven, if He is represented as a sovereign who commands respect from His subjects, we will serve Him, not from choice, but from a sense of inferior strength ; but when He is represented as a loving Father asking the respect and obedience of His children, we are drawn toward Him by the invisible though irresistible bonds of love. The essence of life is love, and God is love.

Let any man upon whom the sun shines serenely, who is prosperous and follows out a certain idea of religion, let him ask himself why he believes in his religion. Is it because he is bribed, because he has never undergone trouble? I say it is better for a man to go to hell doing right than to go to heaven doing wrong. Oh! it is very easy to do right to others as long as others do right by you, but it is a great trial that tests the man. Many souls are made better by sorrow, while others sit down when their skies are darkest, and making their experience the general law, begin to think that the world has cast off her rudder, and to doubt the existence of a God. They believe from bitter experiences that honesty is the best policy as long as it is policy to be honest. If you love people that love you, what reward have you? But if you love them that hate you, your relationship to God is great indeed. I verily believe that in God's universe the good will be the strongest in the end. Christ has revealed a Father at the sacrifice of his life. The greatest and holiest love is to be like him who is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.

H. CHAPIN.

It is foolish to borrow trouble from tomorrow.

THE BOY THAT HAD ONLY ONE TALENT.

"YES, I think I may say without boasting that this is the model school, and Clarence Terry is its model scholar."

Mr. Pigeon, as he spoke, glanced at a slight, tall boy at the head of the class.

"Always first. Recites page after page without the break of a syllable. Obedient, gentlemanly. In short, sir, if you discover a fault in that boy, you must have keener eyes than mine."

It was Mr. Pigeon's last day in the academy. He had been appointed to a college, and the new teacher, Mr. Nagle, had arrived to take his place. Mr. Pigeon, in fact, was inaugurating him in his office.

"Here is the roll of names," he said. "I have added a remark to each which may give you a hint of the character of the boys. You will find it useful."

"John Steele—which is John Steele?" he asked.

"The loutish lad at the bench. You'll observe the vacancy in his face."

Now opposite John Steele's name was written, "The good-for-nothing."

As the boys changed class, Mr. Pigeon whispered, "I am almost forced to believe that that boy's mind is impenetrable, so far as knowledge goes."

Mr. Nagle paid more attention to John Steele than to any other boy that afternoon. It was undeniably a bad case. He was in the first page of the Latin grammar, while the other boys of his age were reading Virgil.

John stumbled over the first declension, breaking down invariably in the vocative. He bounded France by Russia, and moved Canada in a lump down to South America.

Mr. Pigeon had a taste for poetry; he read with fine effect, and was anxious that his boys should acquire the same taste. He was in the habit of reading some brief poems to them at the close of the morning's exercises. To-day he chose Longfellow's "Psalm of Life." The boys were encouraged to give their opinions on it.

"How does this poem affect you, Clarence?" asked Mr. Pigeon.

"They are noble verses, sir," said the lad fluently. "We might take some of them as a motto for our lives."

"Very true. Good criticism. And what did you think of them, John?"

"Didn't think anything."

"You must have some glimmer of an idea about them."

John's freckled face grew red.

"What was it? Out with it."

"Any man's a fool to be spendin' his time making footmarks on the sand," burst out John. "Why didn't he build somethin' that wouldn't wash away?"

Mr. Nagle smiled, and looked at the boy, puzzled. He managed to talk to most of the boys separately during the recess, and among the rest to John.

"I am sorry to see you so low in your class, John."

"I'm always there," promptly. "Mostly foot."

"We must try and bring you up," cheerfully.

"You can't do it, sir"—looking him straight in the eye, and speaking with a ready decision that startled the teacher. "I study more than any boy here, but I can't learn. I'm of no account, Mr. Pigeon says."

Mr. Nagle was very patient with John. But after a few weeks he, too, began to despair. The boy seemed to have absolutely no memory for words, and very little for ideas. If a rule in arithmetic or a fact in history was hammered into his head to-day, by to-morrow it was sure to be gone. As far as this poor brain was concerned, it certainly seemed as if nature preferred a vacuum. One day John's mother called on Mr. Nagle. She was a little, anxious woman, dressed in deep mourning.

"Can you do nothing with the boy?" she said, with tears coming to her eyes. "He is all I have. His father is dead. I hoped to give him a classical course, and to see him in some profession."

"I will do all I can," promised Mr. Nagle. But his heart sank within him.

Leaving Mrs. Steele, he went down into the village street. A crowd had collected about a trench which had been dug for some purpose. The doctor's horse had fallen into it, and was struggling desperately to get out, the shelving yellow clay giving him an uncertain foothold.

Some of the men had struck him

rnually, and some were trying to urge him by dragging at the reins. All the others were looking on solemnly, with their hands in their pockets. Just then Mr. Nagle heard a clear voice :

"Help me bring these planks and put them in the trench."

Surely that was John's voice.

To his surprise, the men listened to him. "What's yer idea, Johnny?"

"The horse can help himself better than all of you can drag him, only give him a solid footing."

In five minutes the poor beast had struggled out, with the help of two or three planks.

He limped as he was led off. Nobody noticed this but John.

"Stop a moment," he cried, and lifting the horse's foot, he picked out a bone from it with a little tool which he took from his pocket; for John's pocket was filled with little tools, and queer, many mechanical contrivances.

"Who made them, John?" said his teacher.

"I did, sir"—looking stupid again.

The next day, about dusk, Mr. Nagle was in the ferry-boat which crossed the river at that point. Several of his pupils were on board, coming back from a match game.

When half-way across the river, there was a loud explosion, and Mr. Nagle found himself clinging to the deck rail, his legs in the water. The boiler had burst with such force that the boat was shattered. A portion of the deck had started from the hulk as the latter sank to the bottom of the river. There was a frantic struggle for life. Then the portion of the wreck he was on floated down stream. About a dozen of the passengers clung to it. The night fell fast. The shore was but a fast receding dark line, with red twinkling lights.

Upon the shattered deck cabin hung a single life-preserved. John saw it, leaped like a cat to where it was, and brought it down.

"Give me that!" shrieked Clarence. "Oh, give it to me! I can't swim!"

"It is for this woman."

There was but one woman among them, and she was old and lame.

"Give it to me, I say! Help! help! we are drowning!"

He seized the life-preserved. John quietly took it from him, and buttoned it under the old woman's arms.

Then he began to drag out one or two benches and boxes that were in the cabin.

Mr. Nagle noticed how cool and alert the boy was, in spite of his deadly pallor and trembling.

"We had better tie ourselves to these," he said. This deck is so shattered it will go to pieces before they see us from the shore."

Mr. Nagle, without a word, followed his advice. John was not a Latinist, and no poet, but he had one quality which made him a leader just then.

A few minutes later the roof broke up, and Mr. Nagle found himself in the rushing current, and was picked up by one of the boats which were out in search of the victims.

The banks were lined with pale, terrified faces. As he was lifted on shore he saw a boy dragged out of the water, and a poor little woman in black fly to him with a wild cry.

"I'm all—all right, mother," gasped John; and then he cried on her breast like the child that he was. "I thought I'd never see you again!" he sobbed.

Now there had been a stranger on board—a queer, wizened little man with a foxy wig. This man, who was among the saved, took up his quarters at the village inn, and presently there arrived a mysterious engine or pump, directed to him, which was placed in the hallway of the inn.

It seemed to have a curious fascination for John. He spent half his leisure time poring over it—measuring the tubes with his inch rule.

In front of the case there was a square of plate glass. Now it happened that one day, while John was relaxing his mind by a game of ball in the street, he threw the ball plump into this bit of glass.

The other boys ran, and John ran too—but only a few steps. Then he went to his savings bank, and took out the money which was meant for Christmas. He presented himself before the old man, who was looking at his shattered glass and taking snuff violently.

"I did that, sir. There is the money for it. Will it be enough?"

"Oh, you did it, eh?" growling at him. "Well, give me the money. What are you eternally prying into my press for, anyhow?"

"It's not a press. It's a pump. I understand it all but that wheel. I can't make out what that wheel is there for."

The old man talked to John awhile. That evening he called on Mrs. Steele, and sent up his card—"Peter Copley, Machinist."

"I've had my eyes on your boy, ma'am," he said abruptly, "for some time. Noticed him the night of the explosion. I'd like to take him with me and teach him my trade. He has a sound, practical head, that boy."

Mrs. Steele accepted the offer, and went with her boy.

Twenty years afterwards, Mr. Nagle, then a judge, tried a case in which the firm of Copley and Steele, engine builders, were plaintiffs.

In the course of the suit, he became acquainted with the junior member of the firm, a man of high standing in his business, and of equally high repute as a man of policy and honour.

One day there was a sudden recognition.

"John Steele, the—?"

"Good-for-nothing? Yes," said John, with a laugh; "and no better acquainted with the classics. I had but one talent, and I came near burying it for life. Whenever I hear a boy despond because he has not a dozen talents, I say, 'Look for the one talent, boy! Look for the one!'"

THE SANDAL TREE.

BENEATH a sandal tree a woodman stood,
And swung the axe, and as the strokes
were laid
Upon the fragrant trunk, the generous
wood
With its own sweets perfumed the cruel
blade.

Go thou and do the like; a soul endued
With light from heaven, a nature pure
and great,
Will place its highest bliss in doing good;
And good for evil give, and love for
hate.

ANCIENT PUNISHMENT FOR DRUNKENNESS.

No popular vice perplexes moralist and statesmen at the present time more than drunkenness does. Various are the suggestions for striking at its root or for punishing those which are the victims of this foul passion for intoxicants.

The offence of drunkenness was a source of great perplexity to the ancients, who tried every possible way of dealing with it. If none succeeded probably it was because they did not begin early enough, by intercepting some of the ways and means by which the insidious vice is incited and propagated. Severe treatment was often tried to little effect.

The Locrians, under Zaleucus, made it a capital offence to drink wine if it was not mixed with water; even an invalid was not exempted from punishment unless by order of a physician. Pittacus, of Mitylene, made a law that he who, when drunk, committed any offence, would suffer double the punishment which he would do in sober; and Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch applauded this as the height of wisdom. The Roman censors could expel a Senator for being drunk and take away his horse; Mahomet ordered drunkards to be bastinadoed with eighty blows.

Other nations thought of limiting the quantity to be drunk at one time or at one sitting. The Egyptians put some limit, though what it was is not stated. The Spartans, also, had some limit. The Arabians fixed the quantity at twelve glasses a man, but the size of the glass was, unfortunately, not clearly defined by the historians. The Anglo-Saxons went no further than to order silver nails to be fixed on the sides of drinking cups, so that each might know the proper measure. And it is said that this was done by King Edgar, after noticing the drunken habits of the Danes. Lycurgus, of Thrace, went to the root of the matter by ordering the vines to be cut down. And his conduct was imitated in 704 by Terbulus of Bulgaria. The Suevi prohibited wine to be imported. And the Spartans tried to turn the vice into contempt by

ystematically making their slaves drunk once a year, to show their children how foolish and contemptible men looked in that state.

Drunkenness was deemed much more vicious in some classes of persons than in others. The ancient Indians held it awful to kill a king when he was drunk. The Athenians made it a capital offence for a magistrate to be drunk, and Charlemagne imitated this by a law that judges on the bench and beaders should do their business fasting. The Carthaginians prohibited magistrates, governors, soldiers, and servants from any drinking. The Scots, in the second century, made it a capital offence for magistrates to be drunk; and Constantine II. of Scotland, 861, extended a like punishment to the young people. Again, some laws have absolutely prohibited wine from being drank by women; the Massilians so decreed. The Romans did the same, and extended the prohibition to the young men under thirty or forty-five. And the husband and the wife's relations could scourge the offender, and the husband himself might scourge her to death.

GONE BEFORE.

Two little white coffins,
Two forms white and chill,
Half hidden with flowers,
Two tiny graves fill.
Two wee ones in heaven,
Heaven's comforts to share,
Miss not our enfolding,
Sheltered tenderly there.
Beholding the Father;
Ne'er to suffer or lack,
Earth, what canst thou offer
To win them now back?
For toil, struggle and danger,
Sin, sorrow, and woe,
The glories of Heaven
Are they to forego?

Our arms they are empty,
Yet we see through our tears
The fair bow of promise
That spans the dead years.
O'er that our hearts travel,
When heavy with pain,
To seek our lost darlings
And hold them again.
Not long we'll be severed,
Not long shall we wait;
For soon us they'll be calling
Through the wide pearly gate.

RULES FOR HOME EDUCATION.

THE following rules are worthy of being printed in letters of gold, and placed in a conspicuous place of every household:—

1. From your children's earliest infancy inculcate the necessity of instant obedience.
2. Unite firmness with gentleness. Let your children always understand that you mean what you say.
3. Never promise them anything unless you are quite sure you can give them what you say.
4. If you tell a little child to do something, show him how to do it, and see that it is done.
5. Always punish your children for wilfully disobeying you, but never punish them in anger.
6. Never let them perceive that they vex you, or make you lose your self-command.
7. If they give way to petulance or ill temper, wait till they are calm, and then gently reason with them on the impropriety of their conduct.
8. Remember that a little present punishment when the occasion arises is much more effectual than the threatening of a greater punishment should the fault be renewed.
9. Never give your children anything because they cry for it.
10. On no account allow them to do at one time what you have forbidden, under the same circumstances, at another.
11. Teach them that the only sure and easy way to appear good is to be good.
12. Accustom them to make their little recitals with perfect truth.
13. Never allow of tale-bearing.
14. Teach them self-denial, not self-indulgence of an angry and resentful spirit.

A YOUNG HERO'S DEVOTION.

WE have all heard of the fearful scourge of "yellow fever" that carried off so many families in the Southern States of America last year. Few among us may have heard of the devotion of a boy, in the presence of such a plague. We lay the story before our

readers as it is told in an American paper:—

Self-devotion for suffering strangers is proof of a noble impulse—always. But at first, though it seems like carrying this to a wild extreme when the only son of a widowed mother persists in casting his safety and his life on the altar of humanity. The hero of the following story was such a son—and an example of such sacrifice—and to know that his mother shared equally in the Christian surrender, and gave him up as many a brave woman has yielded her last for her country's sake, should answer all criticism of his deed.

He walked from his country home into one of the plague-stricken villages—from a place of safety deliberately into a place of danger, a youth of nineteen, a mere boy, pale-faced and slender. It was a time when a great and universal affliction was bringing out alike the cowardice of the selfish and the nobleness of the generous souls, and drawing the line sharply between them. The yellow fever, that terrible Southern scourge, was in the height of its violence, thirty out of one hundred inhabitants were dying every day. The boy presented himself before one of the physicians, and offered his services as a nurse—and helpers were sadly needed.

"Have you ever had the yellow fever?" asked the doctor.

"No, sir."

"Have you ever seen a case of it—known anything about the disease?"

"Never."

"Why, how can you do any good as a nurse here? It's only throwing your life away."

"You can tell me how, and I can do as you tell me."

The doctor was struck with his determination. He looked at the lad, pondering what to do.

"You are a Mississippi boy—native to the climate?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you have exposed yourself, and it's too late to send you back. Stay here and help, and when you come down with the fever, I'll take care of you."

The slender youth at once went to work under the doctor's direction.

Hard and fearful work it was, but he did it well. He made an invaluable assistant. The doctor declared he had never before seen such an instance of patient and tender fidelity. But his turn finally came. The boy nurse accepted his warning, and lay down to die. He had been the means of saving many lives. He had come to do that, urged by his sense of holy duty. The thought that he had succeeded made him grateful, and gave him peace. His friend the doctor hurried to his bedside. He found him lying with closed eyes and arms folded, praying, unconscious of any human person.

"Such a prayer," said the doctor, "I never listened to before." His mother, the physician and nurses, the suffering sick, were all remembered. For himself death had no alarm. He knew whom he had followed and whom his soul trusted in. As gently and faithfully as if he had been his own son, the doctor tended that dear boy. At last the terrible disease gave way. The young nurse recovered, and lived to add to his devoted work.

THE EYES OF THE LORD.

All-Seeing Eyes.—The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.—Prov. xv. 2.

Penetrating Eyes.—All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.—Heb. iv. 13.

Thoughtful Eyes.—For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings.—Prov. v. 21.

Remembering Eyes.—And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness; now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.—Hosea vii. 2.

Pure Eyes.—Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.—Habak. i. 13.

Judging Eyes.—Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to the fruit of his doings.—Jer. xxxii. 19.

Providing Eyes.—A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.—Deut. xi. 12.

LIFE IN DEATH.

HE last smile of sunlight was fading away
From the beautiful brow of the golden-
tressed day,
And the zephyrs breathed softly adown
Upon earth
From regions celestial—the land of their
birth—
And the last parting gleam, and the
Balmiest breath,
Breathed, sweetly united, the calm bed
Of death.

The hour of dark suffering and trial was
gone,
Oppos long fondly cherished had merged
into one—
But hope! oh, its bright consummation
was nigh,
And the weary one felt it were blessed to
die
While that symbol of earth's softest love
was imprest—
The kiss of affection while sinking to rest.
And they lingered around her, for life's
gentle beam
Yet struggled and flickered with varying
gleam;
From the rich flush mantled o'er the white
brow—
Yet the snow-flake was dark if compared
with it now;
And again on each loved one she steadily
gazed,
But again scarce the paralysed eyelid was
raised.

The thin lips were moved, and the dark
lustrous eyes
Were raised to the rapidly night-shrouding
skies;
Perhaps it were easier then earth to leave
Than when brightened with day-beams,
Or smiled on by eve,
While the shadows obscured each loved,
well-known face,
And vision no longer emotion could trace.
They heard her low accents; she asked
them "to bring
Her dear little sister—a sweet, infant
thing—
To look on her own little Amy once more,
To see her bright innocent gladness be-
fore"—
But here her voice failed, yet a look spoke
the rest,
And next instant she strained the young
child to her breast.

The sunlight was gone, but the moon-
light's soft ray
Seemed to lengthen with silvery lustre the
day,

And its radiance subdued found a sweet
resting place
On the calm, pallid brow, and the young
laughing face.

The contrast was strange: there were
Hope's early bloom,
And Faith unprofaned by the shade of the
tomb.

She gazed in the depths of those blue,
joyous eyes,
And she saw there new beauties, fresh
loveliness, rise;
For Innocence realised seemed to be given
In that beautiful type of the Kingdom of
Heaven.
But her sadness, her rapture, what mortal
can tell,
As she kissed little Amy, and faltered
"Farewell!"

A cloud flitted over the moonlight so pale;
An instant the death-bed reposed 'neath
its veil:
Next instant it vanished; they heard a
light breath,
They paused, then approached—and could
this, then, be death?
Nay, death is to fall when thou'rt stained
in the strife,
But to rest thus unsullied—in truth, *this*
is Life.

T. H. M. S.

The Glebe, Dunmurry.

WATCHWORDS OF LIFE.

HOPE,
While there's a hand to strike!
Dare,
While there's a young heart brave!
Toil,
While there's a task unwrought!
Trust,
While there's a God to save!
Learn,
That there's a work for each!
Feel,
That there's strength in God!
Know,
That there's a crown reserved!
Wait,
Though 'neath cloud and sod!
Love,
When there's a foe that wrongs!
Help,
When there's a brother's need!
Watch,
When there's a tempter near!
Pray,
Both in word and deed!

WHOEVER would be sustained by the
hand of God, let him constantly lean upon
it; whoever would be defended by it, let
him patiently repose himself under it.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

THE SAFE PILOT.—With God, go over the sea ; without him, not over the threshold.—*Russian Proverb.*

SPEAK GENTLY.—A Scotch schoolmaster having repeatedly, and, at last, angrily, demanded of the pupils, “Who signed Magna Charta?” a little girl tremblingly replied, “Please, sir, it was na me.”

GRACE BEFORE PORK.—Dr. Adam Clark, who had a strong aversion to pork, was called upon to say grace at dinner, where the principal dish was roast pig. He is reported to have said, “O Lord, if thou canst bless under the gospel what thou didst curse under the law, bless this pig.”

A GOOD SERMON.—We remember to have heard of a woman who had been at church and heard a sermon by which she was deeply impressed. She spoke of it as one of the greatest sermons she had ever heard. On being asked what was the text, she could not repeat it, or tell where it could be found. Nor could she give any clear account of the subject of the discourse or repeat anything that the preacher had said. All she knew was that as soon as she got home she burnt up her half-bushel. The sermon was on the sin of using false weights and measures, and had taken such a hold of her conscience that she made the application by destroying her own measure, which was short. The sermon that leads to reformation does good, even though the text and the discourse are not remembered.

TITIAN.—Titian, the painter, was born at Cadore, near Venice, in 1477, of an ancient and distinguished family. He was a painter for ninety-one years; for when he first held the brush he was a boy of eight, and he continued to paint when he was ninety-nine years of age. At this great age he preserved all his faculties, except that his eyesight was not quite as strong as before, and his touch not quite as sure. “What a pity it is,” he said one day, “that my eyes and hand fail me just when I am beginning to understand what painting is!” He would have probably lived and painted beyond his hundredth year, but for the plague which raged in Venice in 1576. Strongly attached to life, the old man hastened to abandon the city with his son, and directed his steps towards Cadore, his native town. Finding the road impassable from the immense number of fugitives, he was obliged to return to Venice, where he immediately fell a victim to the disease. There is scarcely a scene described in the New Testament which he did not paint, nor scarcely a personage mentioned of whom he did not express his ideal on canvas.

ABOUT CEREMONY.—Excess of ceremony shows want of breeding ; that civility is best which excludes useless formality.

COURAGE, BROTHER.—There is not a stream of trouble so deep and swift-running that we may not cross safely over if we have courage to steer and strength to pull.

EVER REMEMBER.—Secret kindnesses done to mankind are as beautiful as secret injuries are detestable. To be invisibly good is as God-like as to be invisibly evil is diabolical.

A HAPPY ANSWER.—Teacher : “Can you multiply together concrete numbers?” (The class appears uncertain.) Teacher : “What will be the product of forty apples multiplied by six pounds of beef?” Small boy, triumphantly : “Mince pies!”

BROUGHT DOWN AT ONE SHOT.—A spread eagle orator wanted the wings of a bird to fly to every village and hamlet in the broad land ; but he wilted when a small boy in the crowd sang out—“You’d be shot for a goose before you had flied a mile.”

THE PRINCESS ALICE STEAMER.—The *Toronto Mail* says that a touching scene was witnessed the other day at Halifax (N.S.) Standing on the gangway of the steamship *Polynesian*, Dr. Clay, Immigration Agent at the winter port, said to one of the passengers who was holding a little child in his arms, “My good fellow, I want all those children kept out of the cold this sharp morning ; you had better give the baby to its mother.” There was no answer for a few moments. Then the tears stood on his cheeks, as he slowly said, hugging the child more closely to his bosom, “Ah, sir ! she has no mother. I went home to England to bring out my wife and family to make their home in Canada, but just as I arrived my wife and little boy went down in the *Princess Alice* in the Thames, and I have no one left but this baby, sir.”

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Communications to be addressed to the Rev. R. SPEARS, 19, Mornington-road Bow-road, London, E.

Printed by GEORGE REVEIRS, (successor to SAMUEL TAYLOR), Graystone-place, Fetter-lane, London, and the trade supplied by EDWARD T. WHITFIELD, 178, Strand, London.